

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ISTANBUL OBSERVERS VIEW ELECTION

SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATIONS WITH WIDE RANGE POLITICAL PUNDITS AND PROGNOSTICATORS HERE, NUMBER OF COMMON THEMES OR QUESTIONS OCCUR REPEATEDLY. MAJOR QUESTIONS ARE: WILL JP WIN MAJORITY; IF NOT, WHAT KIND OF COALITION LIKELY; HOW REAL IS THE QTE THREAT UNQTE (DEMOCRAT AND NATIONAL SALVATION PARTIES) ON THE RIGHT; HOW STRONG IS VOTER CONCERN WITH CONTINUING PRICE RISES AND HOW WILL IT INFLUENCE THEIR BEHAVIOR? FEW PROFESS TO HAVE RELIABLE ANSWERS BUT THE QUESTIONS THEMSELVES SHED INTERESTING LIGHT ON TERMS OF REFERENCE IN WHICH EDUCATED TURKS HERE TEND TO VIEW ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY

1. CONGEN OFFICERS IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE TAKEN POLITICAL SOUNDINGS FROM WIDE RANGE POLITICAL OBSERVERS INCLUDING PARTY OFFICIALS, JOURNALISTS, PROFESSORS, BUSINESSMEN, TAXI DRIVERS, MAIDS AND EVEN EACH OTHER. WHILE BEWILDERING VARIETY OF OPINIONS ARE ENCOUNTERED, SOME COMMON THEMES TEND TO EMERGE. ON QUESTION OF WHETHER JUSTICE PARTY (JP) LIKELY

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WIN MAJORITY OF SEATS, JP OFFICIALS, QUITE NATURALLY, BUT

ALSO SOME RESPECTED INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS, SEEM CONFIDENT THEY WILL DO SO. REASONING SEEMS TO BE THAT VOTERS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN DEMIREL AS MAN WHO STOOD UP TO MILITARY, THAT VOTERS WILL BUY DEMIREL LINE THAT JP NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESENT INFLATION, AND THAT EVEN IF ECEVIT AND RPP DO WELL, APPEAL OF RIGHT-WING DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP) AND NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) WILL BE VERY LIMITED AND NOT ENOUGH TO DEPRIVE JP OF MAJORITY. THIS LINE OF THOUGHT EXPOUNDED BY, AMONG OTHERS, ISTANBUL JP SENATOR ERDOGAN ADALI WHO RECENTLY PASSED UP CAMPAIGN RALLY TO ATTEND SOCIAL FUNCTION AT CONGEN OFFICER'S HOME. ADALI'S NONCHALANCE HOWEVER MAY BE DUE IN LARGE PART TO FACT THAT HE RUNNING IN THIRD PLACE ON JP LIST AND THUS VIRTUALLY ASSURED RE-ELECTION. MANY OTHER OBSERVERS HERE ARGUE DP AND NSP COULD PRODUCE QTE BIG SURPRISE UNQTE AND THAT 130 TO 140 SEATS FOR RPP NOT AT ALL OUT OF QUESTION.

2. INTERESTINGLY, ONLY POINT ON WHICH ALMOST ALL OBSERVERS TEND AGREE IS THAT REPUBLICAN RELIANCE PARTY (RRP) WILL DO VERY POORLY (FIVE TO TEN SEATS) AND THUS NOT LIKELY BE ABLE FILL ROLE AS JP COALITION PARTNER. AMONG THOSE WHO THINK COALITION WILL BE NECESSARY, PERHAPS MOST FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED OPINION IS THAT DEMIREL WOULD EITHER RESIGN OR BE FORCED OUT AS PARTY LEADER, PAVING WAY FOR JP/DP COALITION. HOWEVER, THEORY BEING PUSHED BY SOME RPP SUPPORTERS (INCLUDING LEFTIST-INCLINED JOURNALISTS SUCH AS ERGUN BALCI OF CUMHURİYET AND KAYHAN SAGLAMER OF ISTANBUL NEWSPAPER) IS THAT DEMIREL TOO BITTEN BY POLITICAL BUG TO RESIGN AND TOO STRONG TO BE FORCED OUT. THEY ARGUE THAT JP/RRP COALITION NOT TO BE EXCLUDED, POINTING OUT THAT BOTH DEMIREL AND ECEVIT HAVE REFRAINED FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS AND THAT WHILE THEY MAY NOT LIKE EACH OTHER, THERE IS MUTUAL RESPECT BOLSTERED BY KEEN SENSE POLITICAL NECESSITY.

3. THOSE PREDICTING UNUSUALLY STRONG SHOWING FOR ECEVIT AND RPP ARGUE THAT REAL QTE SLEEPER UNQTE IN THIS ELECTION IS NOT THREAT FROM DP OR NSP BUT ISSUE OF INFLATION. ARGUMENT IS THAT WHILE NO PARTY HAS DEALT WITH ISSUE OTHER THAN IN GENERALITIES, IT IS IN FACT DOMINANT AND GROWING CONCERN TO MOST VOTERS; THUS COMPLACENT JP ASSUMPTION THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE COULD PROVE SERIOUS ERROR. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, DEPUTY MANAGER LARGE TRUCK/BUS ASSEMBLY FIRM HERE NOTES THAT LEFTIST-ORIENTED DISK UNION EVEN WITH EXISTENCE MARTIAL LAW, HAS MADE GREAT GAINS AMONG COMPANY'S WORKERS IN PAST YEAR, DUE ALMOST SOLELY TO INFLATION ISSUE. HE NOTES THAT EXPERIENCED MACHINIST ON SALARY OF 1200 TL PER MONTH SIMPLY CANNOT MAKE ENDS MEET. SOME OBSERVERS NOTE THAT DISAPPEARANCE TURKISH LABOR

PARTY (TLP) DESPITE AYBAR/UNITY PARTY AGREEMENT, WILL CONSOLIDATE LEFTIST SUPPORT FOR RPP (DISK HAS ALREADY ADVISED ITS MEMBERS TO VOTE RPP).

4. FINALLY, THERE IS QUESTION ECEVIT'S PERSONALITY AND HIS ABILITY APPEAL TO BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE TURKISH VOTER. ONE BUSINESS LEADER HERE, WHO NOT COMMITTED TO ANY PARTY, TOLD CONGEN OFF THERE IS DICHOTOMY IN ECEVIT'S SPEECHES AND ACTIONS WHICH DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE. SAID ECEVIT QTE COULD BE ANOTHER ALLENDE OR COULD BE ANOTHER WILLY BRANDT. AT THIS POINT NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHICH UNQTE.

5. COMMENT: POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE FREQUENTLY COMMENT THAT OUTCOME THIS ELECTION MOST DIFFICULT TO PREDICT IN HISTORY TURKISH REPUBLIC. WITH EXCEPTION JP SUPPORTERS, CONSENSUS OF EDUCATED GUESSING AT PRESENT TIME IS THAT JP WILL NOT WIN MAJORITY. EVEN JP LEADERS, WHILE TRYING TO APPEAR CONFIDENT THAT PARTY WILL COME TO POWER WITH SEATS TO SPARE, HINT DARKLY AT INHERENT INSTABILITY OF COALITION GOVTS. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT JP IS FACING STRONG CHALLENGE FROM RIGHT AND LEFT, IN SOME CASES FROM SMALL BUT DETERMINED PARTIES LIKE DP, WHOSE ISTANBUL CHAIRMAN FRANKLY ADMITS TO SEEKING TO PLAY QTE SPILER UNQTE ROLE. MACE

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